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SUBJECT: SPLM HOSTS ALL PARTIES POLITICAL CONFERENCE: SUPPORT FOR
CPA, RESOLUTION OF DARFUR AND CRITICISM OF NCP

¶1. (U) Summary: After numerous delays and a closed session of the party delegates to discuss procedural issues on September 26, the opening session of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) hosted All Parties Political Conference commenced on September 27, with the conspicuous absence of the National Congress Party (NCP). Leaders of the key Sudanese political parties finally agreed that the conference should focus on implementation of peace agreements, national reconciliation, global economic crisis, democratic transformation and foreign relations. During the opening session, leaders criticized the NCP for not attending the conference, called on the SPLM, NCP and all Sudanese parties to ensure Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) implementation and focused on the need to resolve the crisis in Darfur. Delegates will attend separate breakout sessions on September 28 and the conference will close on September 29. End Summary.

Delays and more delays...

¶2. (SBU) After numerous postponements over the past few months, the diplomatic community again received notice that the SPLM-hosted All Political Parties Conference was planned for Sept 26-29. SPLM Deputy Secretary General Anne Itto told us that much of the delay from earlier dates to the current ones were because the SPLM wanted to have the NCP in attendance as well as Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) Leader Al-Mirghani. In the end, the NCP did not attend and while the DUP did attend, Al-Mirghani did not. Agreement on procedural issues further delayed the conference from commencing on Sept 26, when delegates held an internal meeting late into the night to agree on agenda, observers and procedures for reaching the final communiqué. The delegates reportedly stated they did not come to Juba in order to "rubber-stamp" an "SPLM initiative."

"CPA Classic" or "CPA Plus"?

¶3. (U) In opening remarks, all delegates affirmed their commitment to the CPA and called for its full implementation. However, there were divergences of opinion on whether the CPA should be implemented strictly or modified to create a "CPA plus," to allow Sudanese to choose confederation as a "third option" in addition to the CPA-enshrined choices of unity or separation.

¶4. (U) The Umma National party and Umma-Reform and Renewal, represented by Sadiq el Mahdi and Mubarak-al-Fadil respectively, were the lead proponents of the confederation option, while the SPLM, United Democratic Forum (UDF) and others stressed that the CPA was not open for re-negotiation.

Impediments to CPA - Can Elections Be Held?

15. (U) Across the political spectrum, all party representatives cited significant obstacles to full CPA implementation, and in particular to the holding of elections in April 2010. The oft-discussed impediments included the disputed census results; the need to reform or repeal a number of laws which constrain democratic activities; and the Darfur crisis.

16. (U) Delegates blamed the NCP for placing the elections "in jeopardy," and several participants stated that resolution of the above cited impediments should be a pre-condition for elections. However, few offered an alternative plan of action in the event these obstacles were not overcome. Hassan-Al-Turabi argued that the NCP would "yield under pressure" and advocated an elections boycott if "Darfur is not resolved." At the other end of the spectrum, Hizb el Haq called for all parties to support the SPLM in the elections and for Salva Kiir to head the ticket. (Note: Other than the Hizb el Haq proposal, all other delegates studiously avoided the appearance of forming an elections alliance against the NCP. Delegates hewed to the talking point that the conference was meant to foster national dialogue, not electioneering. End Note.)

Resolution of Darfur Crisis

17. (U) While CPA implementation remained the key focus of the conference, all leaders expressed their concerns over the crisis in Darfur and the need for immediate resolution. The Umma party proffered the most prescriptive proposals for resolving the Darfur crisis, and averred, diplomatically, that as a member of the

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presidency General Salva Kiir could exercise greater leverage. Earlier, the SPLM highlighted its efforts to unify the rebel groups under a common position. All parties underscored that elections which resulted in the disenfranchisement of millions of Darfuris would be a recipe for continued conflict.

18. (U) Next Steps: The All Political Parties Conference is set to conclude on September 29. We understand that participants hope to agree to a Declaration of Principles leading up to the 2010 elections and 2011 referendum at the conference's conclusion. It is still unclear whether the NCP will organize a follow-on conference in Juba as it published earlier.

Asquino